

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L HAMBURG 0613

E. O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJ: FINAL REPORT ON THE APRIL 13, 1975 LAND ELECTIONS IN
SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN

REF: HAMBURG 558

1. THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE APRIL 13 LANDTAG ELECTION IN
SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN SEEMS TO HAVE RUN OUT OF STEAM AND
EVEN THE PARTICIPATION OF NATIONAL POLITICAL LEADERS
FROM BONN ON BEHALF OF THEIR PARTY'S CANDIDATES - STRAUSS,
KOHL, BIEDENKOPF AND CARSTENS FOR STOLTENBERG; SCHMIDT,
BRAND AND WEHNER FOR MATTHIESEN; AND GENSCHER AND ERTL
FOR RONNEBURGER - HAS BEEN LITTLE MORE THAN PERFUNCTORY.
ALTHOUGH THE SURVIVAL OF THE FDP IN THE STATE MAY BE AT
STAKE AND ALTHOUGH THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF THE INCUMBENT
MINISTER-PRESIDENT GERHARD STOLTENBERG AS THE POSSIBLE
CDU CANDIDATE TO RUN AGAINST CHANCELLOR HELMUT SCHMIDT
IN THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN 1976 MAY VERY WELL BE
DETERMINED BY THE MAGNITUDE OF A STOLTENBERG VICTORY,
THE MODD OF THE PARTY SUPPORTERS OF RONNEBURGER AND
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STOLTENBERG AND, INDEED, OF MATTHIESEN TOO, HAS BEEN
STRANGELY APATHETIC FROM THE OUTSET OF THE CAMPAIGN.

ONLY THE RECENT STIMULUS OF FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS AND THE SO-CALLED PIG STY ISSUE - WHETHER OR NOT STRAUSS MEANT AS HE CHARGED DURING AN ASH WEDNESDAY SPEECH AT PASSAU THAT THE SPD/FDP BONN COALITION GOVERNMENT HAD LED THE COUNTRY INTO A PIG STY CONDITION - HAS LIVENED UP WHAT UWE RONNEBURGER, THE FDP STANDARD-BEARER, HAS DESCRIBED AS A LISTLESS AND TOTALLY UNENLIGHTENING ELECTORAL RACE.

2. STOLTENBERG'S PERFORMANCE AS A CANDIDATE HAS CLEARLY ECLIPSED HIS SPD AND FDP OPPONENTS. AS THE ONLY POLITICAL LEADER IN THE STATE WHO ENJOYS A NATIONAL STATURE AND AS THE INCUMBENT MINISTER-PRESIDENT, HIS PUBLIC APPEARANCES HAVE BEEN BETTER ATTENDED THAN EITHER MATTHIEN'S OR RONNEBURGER'S. THE GLOOMY MIASMA OF APPREHENSION WE REPORTED IN OURTEL 558 WHICH SEEMED TO PERMEATE THE CDU FOLLOWING STRAUSS' INTEMPERATE REMARKS AT SONTHOFEN AND PASSAU NOW SEEMS TO BE DISPELLED AND STOLTENBERG AND HIS FELLOW CDU CANDIDATES ARE BEGINNING TO RADIATE THEIR EARLIER EXUBERANCE AND THE CONFIDENCE IN THE PARTY'S ABILITY TO RETURN A ROBUST MAJORITY TO THE LANDTAG ON APRIL 13.

3. ON APRIL 8 THE PRINCIPAL CANDIDATES, INCLUDING THE STANDARD-BEARER FOR SUESCHLESWIGSCHER WAHLERVERBAND (SSW), THE POLITICAL PARTY OF THE DANISH MINORITY, PARTICIPATED IN A FINAL PUBLIC DEBATE IN KIEL. THE ISSUES OF INFLATION, RECESSION AND UNEMPLOYMENT RECEIVED LITTLE ATTENTION AND THE DEBATE QUICKLY DIGRESSED INTO THE REAL HEART OF THE MATTER, TO WIT, WHETHER STOLTENBERG AND MATTHIESEN WERE DOMINATED BY WHAT EACH CLAIMED WAS THE OTHER'S PUPPET-MASTER - FRANZ JOSEF STRAUSS FOR STOLTENBERG AND JOACHIM STEFFEN FOR MATTHIESEN. THIS EXCHANGE GENERATED THE ONLY EXCITEMENT OF THE EVENING. ALTHOUGH THEIR REMARKS WERE CONSIDERABLY LESS STINGING THAN STATEMENTS MADE BY EITHER CANDIDATE EARLIER IN THE WEEK, STOLTENBERG, ONCE AGAIN, CHARGED THAT MATTHIESEN WAS A NEO-MARXIST SUPPORTER OF THE RADICAL JUSO FACTION IN THE STATE. TOUCHING A SENSITIVE SPOT, HE REFERRED TO HIS SPD OPPONENT AS STEFFEN'S "OBEDIENT YOUNG PROTEGE". FOR HIS PART, MATTHIESEN ATTEMPTED TO FIX STOLTENBERG ON THE

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EXTREME RIGHT OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM AND, STRAINING FOR EVEN MORE DRAMATIC EFFECT, EVEN FARTHER TO THE RIGHT THAN STRAUSS HIMSELF. NEITHER OF THESE HYPERBOLIC DESCRIPTIONS WILL, IN OUR OPINION, SWAY THE VOTERS ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. IF ANYTHING ELSE, THESE RIPOSTES INTRODUCED A LAST MINUTE BIT OF COLOR INTO THE RACE WHICH THE URBANE RONNEBURGER COMPLAINED TO THE AUDIENCE HE HAS FOUND TO BE THE MOST UNINSPIRING OF HIS POLITICAL CAREER.

4. AS WE APPROACH THE FINAL DAY OF RECKONING TWO DAYS

AWAY, OUR ELEVENTH HOUR IMPRESSION IS THAT THE RESPECTED REPUTATION OF STOLTENBERG AND HIS HONEST AND COMPETENT ADMINISTRATION DURING THE PAST FOUR YEARS WILL CARRY THE DAY FOR THE CDU ON SUNDAY. OUR FINAL PREDICTION IS THAT THE CDU WILL SLIGHTLY BETTER ITS ELECTORAL TRIUMPH IN THE COMMUNAL ELECTIONS OF MARCH 1974 WHEN THE PARTY RECEIVED 53.1 PER CENT OF THE VOTE CAST. MORE PRECISELY, AT THIS JUNCTURE WE BELIEVE THE FINAL OUTCOME WILL BE ROUGHLY AS FOLLOWS: CDU - 53.5 PER CENT (39 SEATS); SPD - 38 PER CENT (28 SEATS); FDP 6.5 PER CENT (5 SEATS); SSW - 1.5 PER CENT (1 SEAT); OTHER PARTIES 0.5 PER CENT. BROGAN

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